

BOOK REVIEW

ELISEO TORRES and TIMOTHY L. SAWYER, JR. 2005. **Curandero: A Life in Mexican Folk Healing** (ISBN 0 8263 3640 X, pbk.). University of New Mexico Press, 1601 Randolph Rd SE, Suite 2005, Albuquerque, NM 87106, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.unmpress.com/Ordering.html, 1-800-249-7737). \$14.95, 170 pp., b/w drawings, b/w photographs, 5 1/2" × 8".

In this hybrid between a memoir and an anthropological text, *Curandero: A Life in Mexican Folk Healing* recounts Eliseo "Cheo" Torres's experiences with curanderos, or traditional Mexican folk healers. The curandero tradition is strong in South Texas, where Dr. Torres was born and raised. This book covers the spiritual and historical aspects of the tradition, while making room to discuss the tradition as it is practiced today. Curanderos or curanderas heal their patients using herbs and techniques including massage and rituals. In this book, the reader is introduced to several famous curanderos including El Nino Fidencio and Don Pedrito Jaramillo, as well as fictional characters amalgamated from people Dr. Torres knows. Herbal remedies used by curanderos, such as nopal cactus and the ubiquitous chamomile tea and "yerba Buena," or mint are discussed. The authors also lead the reader through magical remedies for spiritual illnesses including mal de ojo and susto. The text together with the black and white illustrations and photographs come together to provide an insider's view of a folk healing tradition that stretches across the Southwest and Mexico.—Marissa Oppel, Museum Assistant, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A., moppel@brit.org

BOOK NOTICE

Interactive DVD

MICHAEL A. DIRR. 2005. **The Interactive Manual and Photo-Library of Woody Landscape Plants. DVD Version.** (ISBN 0-942375-03-3, hbk.). Varsity Press, 337 S. Milledge Ave., Suite 125, Athens, GA 30605, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.nobleplants.com, hillary@nobleplants.com, 706-613-0046 phone/fax). \$99.95, DVD, 7,600 high quality images; System requirements: Windows 98 or better, 22 MB free disk space, DVD player.

This interactive DVD manual provides "text covering 1,670 species and 7,800 cultivars; 1,100 line drawings of leaf and bud characteristics; 7,600 high quality plant images; and a searchable plant database with information about hardiness zones, water and light requirements, growth characteristics, flowers, fruits, and fall color—72 search criteria in all."